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Battle Cry

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Gal. 4:16

New Reina-Valera Gomez —Back to Purity

Issue Date: May/June 2010

The continually bubbling controversy over the English language Bibles appears set to be duplicated in the Spanish world. The current discussion of the English versions revolves around the concept of the "two streams" of supporting manuscripts.

One stream is traced from the original "autographs" first to Antioch of Syria. From there, careful copies were made for distribution. As other languages were required, translations were made by faithful believers committed to communicating the exact meaning of the originals.

Copies and remnants of these faithful translations can be traced to a line of believers across Europe during 1500 years of harassment, being driven into hiding, or burned at the stake.

This line of accurate copies of God's Words would spark the Reformation and ultimately result in the Authorized King James Version, the "thus saith the Lord" for several centuries of English speakers.

The other stream of manuscripts flows through Alexandria, Egypt. Copying was sloppy and translations show a consistent effort to inject unbiblical theology and philosophy and diminish the deity of Jesus.

This stream flows up through the Vatican and ultimately formed the polluted Westcott and Hort Greek on which the "modern" bibles are based. (See [Did the Catholic Church Give Us The Bible?](#) by David W. Daniels.)

So, where did the line of Spanish Bible translations fit into this? The first Reina-Valera Spanish Bible became available in 1609 —based on the same faithful manuscripts that support the KJV. It served for some 300 years as the "Word of God in Spanish."

However, it was suppressed because most of the Spanish world was under the heel of Rome. The whole history of the Reformation was a struggle between the popes and the Reformers over control of the Bible. In the English world, the Reformers won. In Spain and Latin America, the Vatican won.

As religious freedom spread, Rome's influence was beaten back and in 1909 an updated RV was released. Unfortunately, the Spanish translators used some Alexandrian sources damaging the purity of the 1909 RV. In 1960, another "update" was released. By this time the Alexandrian pollution was so widespread that the 1960 version was seriously tainted.

By 1990, the 1960 RV had become deeply entrenched. Yet, Latin church leaders remained concerned about its purity. Humberto Gomez, a native of Mexico, veteran pastor and church planter, realized that, by using the internet, a host of collaborators, from scholarly linguists to seasoned pastors, could work together to produce a version faithful to the originals that formed the KJV, yet maintaining the linguistic beauty of the RV.

He began to personally collect information on the problems in the 1960 RV. Then he submitted his notes to other concerned church leaders including some who were credentialed linguists with fluency in several related languages.

Using their input, in 2004, a preliminary draft was circulated widely among Spanish pastors, missionaries, and other Christians with professional expertise in Bible translation. Comments poured in.

Each was carefully considered as it related to the purity of the Reformation scriptures. After years of this process, a final version was published in 2010. It is now being printed and distributed by several publishers. Since the 2004 version was made public, the same kind of debate that surrounds the English versions has increased in intensity.

The central question in both debates is the purity of the sources and integrity of the copyists and translators. Honest researchers such as David W. Daniels, have concluded that the northern stream has a purity unmatched by the other, Vatican-supported stream of manuscripts.

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[Battle Cry](#)

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Gal. 4:16

RVG 2010 — New Translation or Revision?

Issue Date: July/August 2010

The new Reina-Valera Gomez Spanish Bible is not a new translation of the Bible in Spanish, but simply a revision of the beloved Reina-Valera used by God for over 400 years, says author Emanuel Rodriquez in his new book, [God's Bible in Spanish: How God Preserved His Words in Spanish through the RVG](#). Here is an excerpt from the English edition:

A misconception is that the goal of Dr. Gómez was to produce a KJV in Spanish. This is not so. He has publicly, and on numerous occasions, made it clear that his firm conviction is that God gave the Spanish-speaking world the Reina-Valera Bible, the greatest literary work in the history of the Spanish language.

This traditional form of the Bible has been and should continue to be the standard format for the Spanish-speaking people. God has placed his stamp of approval upon it. This is evidenced by its fruit, and the loyalty of Hispanic Bible believers that it has enjoyed.

The Reina-Valera Bible is part of our heritage. To try and replace it would be to dishonor what God has done for the Spanish-speaking world. Others have tried to replace the Reina-Valera by starting a whole new Spanish translation of either the KJV or one of the other ancient Spanish Bibles (such as Enzina's New Testament). Despite how noble their intentions may have been, there is a good reason why their efforts were not successful.

We did not believe that replacing the form of the Reina-Valera was the answer. Dr. Gómez's effort was revision not replacement. Thus, the Reina-Valera Gómez is not a Spanish carbon copy of the English KJV but rather a version of the Reina-Valera that is equivalent to the KJV, yet true to its root form. In fact, many of the changes that were made were simply readings that already existed in the original 1602 Valera. Thus, in many places the RVG has actually returned to its original form as rendered over four hundred years ago.

For example, in Luke 23:42 the KJV says: And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. The RV 1909 and 1960 both omit the word "Lord" (Señor). Yet that word "Lord" was included in this verse in the original 1602 Valera just like it is rendered in the KJV. Dr. Gómez and his collaborators reinserted the word "Lord" back to its rightful place in Luke 23:42 in the RVG, thus returning to its original rendering.

Another example is in Mark 1:2. The KJV says: As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The RV 1909 and 1960 change "written in the prophets" to "written in Isaiah the prophet..." (The NIV, ASV, RSV, and most other Alexandrian-based Bibles in English do the same thing). This is a gross error because both quotes in Mark 1:2-3 are not from the prophet Isaiah. One does quote Isaiah (40:3) but the other quotes Malachi (3:1).

So both the RVG and KJV are correct in saying "in the prophets." The original 1602 is also correct for it says "in the prophets." Dr. Gómez and his collaborators changed Mark 1:2 to read "in the prophets" (en los profetas) returning to its original wording as in the 1602 Valera and consequently matching the KJV and Textus Receptus. Many other verses in the RVG have also been returned to their original reading as they stood in the 1602 Valera.

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The Spanish Fountain: A History and Review of the Reina-Valera Version

By Thomas Holland, Th. D. (Email: Logos1611@aol.com)

Neither did we think much to consult the translators or commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, no, nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see. --The Translators To The Reader

The King's translators acknowledged several sources which were used to produce the Authorized Version. These were given, "through the good hand of the Lord." In addition to the standard tools used by translators, the men of the King James Bible used previous English and foreign translations as well. Among them was the Reina-Valera Version of 1602, and justly so, for there is a close relationship between the Valera and the KJV. Not only because they are historical cousins based on the same textual type, but because they are equally respected among their respective peoples. Therefore, it is not surprising that the American Bible Society referred to the Valera as, "the King James Version of the Spanish-speaking world." (Remembering Casiodoro De Reina, Bible Society Record, 1969).

The temptation to compare the two is understandable, and anyone who has studied the Valera would be compelled to do so. Dr. Wilton M. Nelson, a former missionary to Costa Rica, noted that the year 1969, "marked the 400th anniversary of the Reina-Valera version of the Spanish Bible, which can be thought of as the Hispanic-American counterpart of the King James Version." (New Light from the Old Lamp, Latin America Evangelist [American Bible Society Publication, Jan./Feb., 1970], p. 9). This does not mean the two are identical, but they are extremely close. Despite several revisions the Valera has undergone, it remains the closest Spanish Bible to the Authorized Version in text, style, and historical impact.

The History Of The Spanish Bible

The earliest Scriptures translated into Spanish appeared in 1490 consisting of the Gospels and were translated from the Latin Vulgate. In 1512, this version was revised and expounded to contain the Epistles of the New Testament by a Catholic monk, Ambrosio de Montesino. This was then revised by a Benedictine monk, Roman de Vallezillo. Their work, however, was not intended for public use and the need for a Spanish Bible still remained.

In 1543, Francisco de Enzinas, a Protestant, translated a complete Spanish New Testament and attempted to issue it into circulation. Enzinas had sought royal approval for his work and on November 24th presented a copy of his New Testament to the Emperor, Charles. The Emperor, however, did not favor Enzinas' work and he was arrested on December 13th of that year for what was considered perverse readings in his version emphasizing justification by faith. Cited against Enzinas were his readings in Romans 3:22, 28, 1 Cor. 3:11, Col. 3:5, and 1 Tim. 6:10 which were all in capital letters. Enzinas escaped from prison on February 1, 1545 and thus escaped death from the hand of the Spanish Inquisition.

Juan Perez de Pineda, a Protestant theologian, translator, and Reformer, also translated the New Testament into Castilian (a very pure form of Spanish) around 1553. He also translated commentaries into Spanish in opposition to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

The first Spanish Old Testament was published in 1553 and was known as the Ferrara Bible. It was intended for the Spanish-speaking Jews, having been arranged in the order of the Hebrew canon. The title page states that this version was approved by the office of the Inquisition and thus was not affected by their proscription on other translations of the Bible.

Casidoro de Reina (1520-1594) was the first to translate the entire Bible into Spanish. His work took twelve years to complete at the cost of much personal sacrifice. As with English translators such as John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, Reina suffered persecution because of his desire to give his countrymen God's word in their own language. Born in Seville, Reina was raised Roman Catholic (again like Wycliffe and Tyndale). He grew in his studies and became a monk at the San Isidro Monastery in Seville. It was there that his life began to change.

The Superior of the monastery was Dr. Blanco Garcia Arias, who had been influenced by the Old Latin Bible of the Waldenses and their preaching which had infiltrated the iron hand of Rome in Spain. Arias became a Believer and began reading to his students the writings of the Reformers. Reina listened intently to the teachings of the Reformers and was converted. At this point in his life he began to publicly proclaim the Reformation theme of "justification by faith." Needless to say, this did not sit well with the Roman Catholic Church. Persecution fell and Reina fled his homeland, never to return.

In 1557 Reina and ten of his friends went to Frankfurt, Germany and joined the Huguenot church. There he became the pastor of a small group of Spanish Protestants who likewise had escaped the claws of the Spanish Inquisition. However, the hand of Rome once again threatened him, so he and his wife (who disguised herself as a seaman) fled to Antwerp in the Netherlands. In 1564, King Philip of Spain put a price on Reina's head, causing him to return to Frankfurt. It was during his second flight to Frankfurt when Reina began his work on the Spanish Bible.

Five years later, in 1569, he published 2,600 copies of the entire Bible in Spanish. This edition is commonly referred to as the "Bear Bible" because it used as its symbol a bear retrieving honey from a tree. The Inquisition soon seized as many copies of the Reina Version as they could and destroyed them calling it a, "most dangerous edition of the Bible." (Dr. S. L. Greenslade, The Cambridge History of the Bible [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983], p. 126). The Inquisition had already issued a decree in 1551 prohibiting the, "Bible in Castilian (Spanish) romance or in any other vulgar tongue." (Ibid., p. 125). The decree further stated:

(The) Old and New Testaments, Gospels, Epistles and Prophecies and any other books of Holy Scripture in Castilian romance, French or Flemish or any other tongue which have prefaces, notes, or glosses that reveal erroneous doctrines, repugnant or contrary to our holy Catholic faith or to the sacraments of Holy Mother Church . . . And because there are some pieces of Gospels and Epistles of St. Paul and other parts of the New Testament in the Castilian vernacular both printed and in manuscript form which certain objectionable consequences have followed, we order such books and treatises to be shown and handed over to the Holy Office, whether or not they bear their authors' names, until the Council of the Holy General Inquisition shall determine otherwise. (Ibid.)

Consequently, few copies of Reina's Bible ever made it to his homeland. It was used, however, by Spanish-speaking refugees who had fled Spain because of the Inquisition. After his Bible was published in 1569, Reina organized a church in Frankfurt which he pastored until his death on March 16, 1594.

Cipriano de Valera was born in 1531, and his life mirrored that of Reina's. He, too, was a monk at the San Isidro Monastery in Seville and studied under the teaching of Dr. Arias. In fact, Valera was one of the ten who fled Spain with Casidoro de Reina in 1557. Later Valera went to Geneva where he became a follower of famed Reformer John Calvin. He became interested in personal evangelism and desired to increase his understanding of the gospel. He moved to England to study at Cambridge. Later, he taught at Oxford.

While in England, Valera translated Calvin's Institutes into Spanish and wrote a book entitled, El Papa y la Misa (The Pope and the Mass). In it, he condemned the service of the Mass proclaiming it as pagan and condemned the authority of the Pope as supreme Bishop. It was during this time that Valera married and began to expand his personal ministry to include an outreach to seamen and those who were imprisoned.

In 1582, he began to revise the work of Reina. At the age of 70 in 1602, after 20 long years of work, Valera finished his revision and published what has become known as the Reina-Valera Version. In his own words, Valera made the following proclamation about his and Reina's work:

The reason for my motivation in making this edition, was the same that motivated Casidoro de Reina, who had been motivated by that hallowed Person, the Lord Himself. He desired to proclaim the glory of God and to make a clear service to his nation. Therefore, he began to translate the Holy Bible (into Spanish). (Dr. Hazael T. Marroquim, editor, Versiones Castellanas De La Biblia, [Mexico: Casa De Publicaciones El Faro], p. 139)

Valera believed his revision of Reina's work produced the pure word of God for the Spanish-speaking world. Dr. Henry C. Thompson agreed and claimed that these two precious Saints, "penetrated to the depths of Holy Scripture and translated with perfection the Greek and Hebrew languages." (Ibid., 19).

As with Reina, Valera endured much for Christ. In the Spanish history book about Spanish Bibles, Versiones Castellanas De La Biblia, Dr. Alejandro Clifford writes:

"Valera sufrió grande miseria . . . el Señor recompense a sus siervos, Cipriano de Valera recibirá un muy grande galardón de manos de su Salvador." [Valera suffered great misery (for the Lord) . . . When the Lord rewards his servants, Cipriano de Valera will receive a great prize from the hand of the Savior.] (Ibid., 39).

The Various Revisions And Editions Of The Reina-Valera Version

The following list the majority of revisions and reprints of the Reina-Valera Version. It is offered as historical information. Contrary to popular thought, some editions of the Valera were produced in order to reestablish the version's historical link with the Greek Textus Receptus. By the late 1800's the editions of the Valera were strongly influenced by the findings of Westcott and Hort. However, the 1909 edition was produced in order to move the Valera back to its traditional roots, thereby making it closer to the King James, than editions produced in the middle to end of the nineteenth century.

1569

The complete Bible by Reina. He used the Masoretic Hebrew text for the Old Testament, as well as the Old Latin and Ferrara's Spanish Old Testament. For the New Testament he used the Greek Textus Receptus and compared it with the Old Latin and Old Syriac manuscripts known to him. It contained the Old Testament Apocrypha and is scattered throughout the Old Testament in the same order set forth in the Latin Vulgate. It mistakenly omits the phrase "by faith" in Romans 3:28, and all of Hebrews 12:29.

1596

The New Testament revision of Reina by Valera was published.

1602

The entire Reina Version of the Bible is revised by Cipriano de Valera and is published. Changes were made to agree more closely with the Greek Textus Receptus and the language was revised as well. The Apocrypha was removed from the Old Testament and placed between the two Testaments to agree with most Protestant Bibles of that day. Valera also added a note, as the Geneva Bible did, stating the historical importance of the Apocrypha and yet denying its inspiration. The phrases which were left out of the 1569 edition by Reina were placed back into the text by Valera. However, in Romans 1:16 the phrase "of Christ" was omitted.

1622

A reprint of the Reina Version without Valera's changes was published.

1625

A reprint of the Reina-Valera Version of 1602. No changes were made.

1831

A revision of the Valera New Testament by the Glasgow Bible Society. Revisions were made in spelling and calligraphy.

1845

A reprint of the 1831 edition with some minor revision on antiquated Spanish words.

1849

A reprint of the 1845 edition, no additional changes made.

1857

A publication of the Gospel of Matthew only for use in evangelistic work among Latin American Jews.

1858

A revision of the New Testament by the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS). Revisions were made in orthography, calligraphy, punctuation, and some minor textual changes.

1860

A reprint of the 1858 New Testament.

1862

La Santa Biblia, a revision of the complete Bible. The revision was made by Dr. Lorenzo Lucena, a professor at Oxford University. His changes included additional revisions in orthography and a modernized diction was added. The Old Testament Apocrypha, which had been placed between the Testaments, was removed.

1863

A reprint of the 1862 edition.

1854

A reprint of the 1858 edition.

1865

An additional reprint of the 1858 edition.

A reprint of the 1831 New Testament edition.

A new revision of the Valera by the American Bible Society (ABS). Dr. Angel H. de Mora and Dr. H. B. Pratt (an American Presbyterian missionary in Bogota) worked on this major revision. Dr. Pratt made most of the textual changes based on the then recent discoveries of Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus by Dr. Constantin Tischendorf. Thus, of all the revisions of the Valera to this date, this one had more changes in its textual base. There were about 100,000 changes made regarding orthography and calligraphy, and about 60,000 changes made in wording. The work began in 1861 and was finished in 1865. It is because of this major revision that the need for a Valera which reflected the traditional text arose. The movement to restore the Valera to its former textual roots occurred in the 1909 edition.

1866

A reprint of the 1862 edition.

1867

A reprint of the 1858 edition.

1869

A revision of the 1862 edition with minor changes, none of which were textual.

A reprint of the 1865 edition of the ABS revised text, published in the New Testament, and the New Testament with Psalms. These two editions were published to promote the work of Mora and Pratt.

1870

A revision of the 1862 edition. This revision was done by Dr. E. B. Cowell of Cambridge University. No known textual changes were made, the revisions were limited to spelling and punctuation. Additionally, references were added by Dr. George Alton, a Wesleyan missionary to Spain.

Later that year the ABS issued a reprint of their 1865 revision of the whole Bible.

1871

A reprint by the ABS of their 1865 edition, New Testament only.

1872

An additional reprint of the ABS' 1865 edition of the New Testament.

1875

An additional reprint by the ABS of their 1865 edition, New Testament only.

1876

A reprint of the 1865 edition, the whole Bible, by the ABS.

A reprint of the 1862 edition by the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS).

1877

A reprint of the 1865 edition of the ABS. This reprint also was of the entire Bible.

A new revision by Dr. Pratt of the Gospel of Matthew only. Additional textual changes were made and the text was based on the Greek New Testament by Dr. Tischendorf. There were no other editions of this revision published.

1878

A reprint of the 1865 edition published by the ABS.

1879

A revision of the Psalms by Dr. Pratt.

1883

A reprint of the 1862 edition with changes made in the Psalms revised by Dr. Pratt in 1879.

1884

A reprint of the 1865 edition, New Testament only. This edition contained a parallel edition with the King James Version in English.

1885

A reprint of the 1877 edition of the Psalms.

1886

A revision of the Gospel of Luke. This revision was made by Dr. E. Reeves Palmer of the BFBS who served as a missionary to Spain. His revisions were made

based on the Greek Textus Receptus with footnotes and references to the various Greek works of Tischendorf, Alford, as well as Westcott and Hort.

1887

A revision of the New Testament by Dr. Palmer with additional footnotes by the above textual scholars.

1888

A reprint of the 1865 edition, New Testament only.

A reprint of the 1879 edition of the Psalms.

1889

Another reprint of the 1879 edition of the Psalms.

A reprint of the 1865 edition by the ABS, Gospels and Acts only.

1890

A reprint of the 1865 edition of the whole Bible by the ABS.

1891

A reprint of the 1865 edition, New Testament only.

1893

A reprint of the whole Bible by the ABS of its 1865 edition.

A revision of the Gospel of Matthew by the BFBS with some minor changes.

1895

A reprint of the 1865 edition of the whole Bible by the ABS.

1896

A reprint of the 1879 edition of Pratt's Psalms.

1897

A reprint of the 1865 edition of the New Testament only.

1899

A reprint of the 1893 edition of the Gospel of Matthew.

1901

A revision of the Spanish New Testament which was used later in the 1909 edition of the whole Bible. This revision was made to return the Valera back to its traditional roots with the Greek Textus Receptus.

1902

A reprint of the 1865 edition by the ABS.

1903

A reprint of the 1865 edition by the ABS.

1905

An additional reprint of the 1865 edition by the ABS.

A revision of the Old Testament in Spanish which was later used in the 1909 edition.

1909

A revision of the whole Bible. This edition was made by the BFBS and the ABS. The revision was made by Dr. Victoriano D. Baez, Dr. Carlos W. Dress, Dr. Enriue C. Thomson, Dr. Juan Howland, and Dr. Francisco Diez. Various Latin American nations were represented by this committee: Mexico, Puerto Rico, Chile, and Argentina. This revision made changes to the 1865 edition to make it agree more closely with the Greek Textus Receptus. This made the 1909 edition of the Valera the closest to the King James Bible since its production in 1602. According to Dr. Eugene Nida of the ABS, this edition of the Valera was produced out of concern over the revisions which had occurred between the years 1865 and 1899 ("Reina-Valera Spanish Revision of 1960," The Bible Translator [New York: ABS, Vol. 13, No 1, Jan. 1962], p. 113). Not all of the textual changes made by the 1865 edition were changed. For example, in Mark 1:2 the phrase of the Textus Receptus, "the prophets," still reads as the 1865 edition, "Isaiah the Prophet."

1960

A revision by the ABS. There is a brief comparison between this edition, which gained popular support after its production, and the 1909 edition listed below. Until 1978, the only two editions in print were the 1960 edition and the 1909 edition. This edition is the most commonly used version of the Valera used today throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

1978

The ABS offered a revision of its 1960 edition with some slight additional modification of the text.

1909 And 1960 Revisions

From 1909 onward, the emphasis in Spanish Bibles was not to revise the Valera in order to make it agree once again with the findings of modern textual criticism, but to produce additional Spanish translations which agreed with modern textual theories. Therefore, translations such as the Version Revisada Standar (a Spanish Revised Standard Version) and the Version Popular (a Spanish Today's English Version) and others were constructed. However, the Valera has remained as the standard Spanish Bible for Protestants who speak Spanish as their native language. It should be noted that for many Spanish-speaking Christians, the Valera (and especially the 1909 edition) is considered the very word of God.

Dr. Francisco "Poco" Guerra of Mexico has been concerned for sometime about the various problems in the Valera (in both the 1909 and 1960 editions) when they do not agree with the Greek Textus Receptus and the original Reina-Valera Version. However, despite his concerns, Dr. Guerra recognized the strong connection the Valera has with the KJV. He writes:

El Nuevo Testamento de "Reina-Valera" es el equivalente a la version en Ingles de "K.J." o al Textus Receptus, . . . pero no en todo. (The Reina-Valera New Testament is the equivalent to the English K(ing) J(ames), that is the Textus Receptus, . . . but not in total. (Proyecto: Problematica Y Busca De Soluciones Para La Biblia En Espanol, [unpublished report] p. 4).

While this quote illustrates that the Valera is recognized to vary from the KJV in some points, it also illustrates the association the two versions have with each other. Further, we must recognize that the Valera (rather the 1909 edition or the 1960) is the closest Spanish Bible to the KJV, closer than any other Spanish version on the market having been based on the same basic Greek text. Additionally, the Valera has won the hearts of the Spanish-speaking world very much like the KJV has the English-speaking world - not only because of its Greek text, but also because of its style and antiquity.

The 1960 edition was not overwhelmingly accepted when first produced. Deep within the hearts of the Spanish world there was a great devotion for the 1909 edition. Some rejected to the changes made in the 1960 edition, calling for the Spanish-speaking Christian to remain faithful to the 1909 Valera. "Every word in the Bible is important to 'The Bible Believer.' Therefore, 'The Bible Believer' will reject the 1960 revision . . . ," so wrote one group wishing to support the earlier Valera (Revision 1960, pamphlet, [Milton, FL.:The Bible Believers Spanish Fellowship], p. 1). They go on to note, "The Greek text supports . . . the 'Antiqua (i.e. Old) 1909'. The Greek text does not support . . . the 1960 revisions." (Ibid., p.3).

Dr. Eugene Nida, a textual scholar who helped with the 1960 revision, noted the objections he faced. Nida writes:

Part of the difficulty in assessing just what types and how many changes were desirable, if the constituency was to be served and satisfied, was the fact that despite this desire for some limited number of changes the Protestant constituency in Spanish-speaking Latin America is predominately very conservative on matters of Biblical interpretation and use . . . In fact, in some limited groups even the pastors were afraid to suggest the slightest changes in the text, for fear that they might seem to be tampering with the Word of God. On one occasion the very mention of "manuscripts" in a talk about the history of the Spanish Bible brought an expression of deep concern from one pastor, who arose and in an almost tearful plea, held out a battered copy of the Reina-Valera text (1909) and said, "But is not this the Word of God?" ("Reina-Valera Spanish Revision of 1960," The Bible Translator [New York: ABS, Vol. 13, No. 1, Jan. 1962], p. 108)

When dealing with the differences between the 1909 and 1960 editions of the Valera, and the differences between any edition of the Valera and the King James Version, it may serve us well to remember the words of the King's translators themselves. Regarding the previous early English versions and the Latin Roman Catholic version of the Vulgate, the KJV translators wrote:

. . . and all is sound for substance, in one or other of our editions, and the worst of ours far better than their authentic vulgar . . .the very meanest translation of the Bible in English (or Spanish we might add), set forth by men of our profession, . . . containeth the Word of God, nay, is the Word of God. (The Translators To The Reader)

Examples Of Textual And Translational Differences

Those who wish to say the Valera is a Spanish King James Bible will be greatly disappointed. It is not totally identical with the KJV in either text or translation (nor, for that matter, can it be). Even if the texts were one-hundred percent identical, the translation would not be because of certain idioms presented in all three languages (Greek, English, and Spanish). However, the Valera is closer to the KJV than any other Spanish version on the market and may be considered the equivalent to the KJV in Spanish.

Below is a list of seventy textual differences between the King James Version and the New International Version (NIV). These are compared with the 1909 and 1960 editions of the Valera as well as the Spanish Version Revisada Standar (VRS) of 1952 and the Version Popular (VP) of 1966. Readings agreeing with the Textus Receptus are indicated with a "TR." Readings agreeing with the Critical Text are indicated with a "C."

English - Spanish

KJV NIV 1909 1960 VRS VP

Matthew

- 5:22 TR C TR C C C
- 5:27 TR C C C C C
- 5:44 TR C TR TR C C
- 9:13 TR C TR TR C C
- 12:47 TR C TR TR C TR
- 16:20 TR C TR TR C C
- 18:2 TR C TR TR C TR
- 18:11 TR C TR TR C C
- 20:16 TR C TR TR C C
- 20:22 TR C TR TR C C
- 21:44 TR C TR TR C C
- 22:30 TR C TR TR C C
- 23:14 TR C TR TR C C
- 25:13 TR C TR TR C C
- 27:35 TR C TR TR C C

Mark

- 1:2 TR C C C C C
- 1:14 TR C TR TR C C

6:11 TR C TR TR C C
7:27 TR C TR TR TR TR
9:44 TR C TR TR C C
9:46 TR C TR TR C C
10:7 TR C TR TR C C
10:21 TR C TR TR C C
11:10 TR C C C C C
11:26 TR C TR TR C C
12:23 TR C TR TR C C
5:28 TR C TR TR C C

Luke

2:33 TR C TR TR C C
2:44 TR C TR TR C C
4:4 TR C TR TR C C
4:8 TR C TR TR C C
9:56 TR C TR TR C C
9:57 TR C TR TR C C
11:2 TR C TR TR C C
12:31 TR C TR TR C TR
17:36 TR C TR TR C C
3:17 TR C TR TR C C

John

4:42 TR C TR TR C C
5:4 TR C TR TR C C
8:1-11 TR C TR TR C C
8:29 TR C TR TR C TR

Acts

2:30 TR C TR TR C C
4:24 TR C TR TR C C
8:37 TR C TR TR C C
15:18 TR C TR C C C
16:31 TR C TR TR C C
17:26 TR C TR TR C C
24:7 TR C TR TR C C
28:29 TR C TR TR C C

Romans

1:16 TR C C C C C
8:1 TR C TR TR C C
11:6 TR C TR TR C C
15:8 TR C TR TR C C
16:24 TR C TR TR C C

1 Corinthians

5:4 TR C TR TR C C
6:20 TR C TR TR C C
9:1 TR C C C C C
10:28 TR C TR TR C C

Galatians

6:15 TR C TR TR C C

Ephesians

3:9 TR C C C C C
5:30 TR C TR TR C C

Colossians

1:14 TR C TR TR C C

1 Thessalonians

1:1 TR C TR TR C C

1 Timothy

3:3 TR C TR TR C C
3:16 TR C TR TR C C

1 John

5:7 TR C TR TR C C

Revelation

1:6 TR C TR C C C
1:8 TR C TR TR C C
1:11 TR C TR TR C C
21:24 TR C TR TR C C

Variance with TR

0 70 6 9 69 65

In his book, Evaluating Versions of the New Testament, Everett Fowler compares various English versions and Greek texts. He establishes a series of tables and notes the number and percentages of textual variances (the book is published by Maranatha Baptist Press in Watertown, WI.). In each case the King James Bible is used as the standard. I have adapted the final outcome of these tables to reflect textual variances textual variances between the New American Standard (NASV), the NIV, and the Valera of 1909. This establishes the fact that the Valera is a KJV equivalent.

Table 1

26 Possible Whole Verses Omitted Or Bracketed

NASV 16

NIV 17

1909 0

Table 2

196 Possible Significant Portions Of Verses Omitted

NASV 185

NIV 180

1909 14

Table 3

229 Possible Omissions Of The Names Of The Lord God

NASV 210

NIV 173

1909 21

Table 4

327 Possible Differences Of Substantial Meaning

NASV 237

NIV 229

1909 6

There are certain fundamental doctrines which have been impaired in some places of the critical Greek texts, and consequently their respective English translations. The Valera (in both the 1909 and 1960 editions), having been based on the Traditional Greek text, maintains the integrity of these verses, as does the English Authorized Version. The following are a few examples:

Passage KJV Valera

Matt. 9:13 "to repentance" "arrepentimiento"

Matt. 18:11 "For the Son of man is come "Porque el Hijo del Hombre ha vendio

to save that which was lost." para salvar lo que se habia perdido."

Mark 9:44 (46) "Where their worm dieth not, "donde el gusano de ellos no muere,

and the fire is not quenched." y el fuego nunca se apaga."

Luke 2:33 "Joseph" "Jose"

John 1:18 "only begotten Son" "el unigenito Hijo"

Acts 17:26 "blood" "sangre"

Col 1:14 "through his blood" "por su sangre"

1 Tim. 3:16 "God" "Dios"

1 John 5:7 "For there are three that "Porque tres son los que

bear record in heaven, dan testimonio en el cielo:

the Father, the Word, el Padre, el Verbo

and the Holy Ghost: y el Espiritu Santo:

and these three are one." y estos tres son uno."

The chart below is a comparison reflecting translational differences. Here the differences are between the KJV and the New King James Version (NKJV), and

Reference KJV NKJV 1909 Agree

Mark 4:19 lusts desires codicias KJV

Luke 6:40 perfect perfectly trained perfecto KJV

John 1:3 by through por Both

John 4:24 a Spirit Spirit es Espiritu KJV

Acts 4:27 child servant hijo KJV

Acts 8:9 bewitched astonished magico KJV

Acts 12:4 Easter Passover Pascua Both

Acts 17:22 Mars Hill Areopagus Areopago NKJV

Romans 1:18 hold the truth suppress the truth detienen KJV

1 Cor. 1:22 require request piden Both

2 Cor. 2:17 corrupt peddling mercaderes NKJV

2 Cor. 5:17 I am crucified I have been Estoy juntatmente KJV

crucified crucificada

1 Thess. 5:22 appearance form apartaos KJV

1 Thess. 5:23 unto at para la venida KJV

2 Thess. 2:2 is at hand had come este cerca KJV

1 Tim. 6:10 the root a root la raiz KJV

1 Tim. 6:20 science knowledge ciencia KJV

2 Tim. 2:15 study be diligent diligencia NKJV

2 Tim. 3:12 all who will all who desire y tambien todos KJV

Titus 1:16 reprobate disqualified reprobados KJV

Heb. 4:8 Jesus Joshua Josue NKJV

1 Peter 1:7 trial genuineness prueba Both

2 Peter 1:3 to by por Both

1 John 3:4 law lawlessness ley KJV

Rev. 1:6 God and His father His God and Father Dios y su Padre KJV

Claims Of Mistranslations In The Valera

Over the years, there have been some published attacks on the Valera claiming mistranslations of the Spanish text. Most of these have come from good-minded individuals who desire a Spanish text identical to the English KJV. However, the very nature of language would not make this possible. The Valera is the closest Spanish Bible that matches the KJV in text, history, and eloquence. Nevertheless, there are those who criticize the Valera and yet fail to provide the Spanish-speaking world with a valid alternative. Unjust criticism is neither scholastic nor Christian. The following are a few examples of such.

Matthew 5:22

The charge is that the Valera of 1909 has left out the phrase "without a cause." This statement is true of the 1960 edition, but not of the 1909. The older Valera uses the word *locamente*, which means "without reason or cause."

Luke 1:35

Some have stated that the 1909 reads "Holy One" and not "Holy Thing" as found in the KJV. This is due to a lack of understanding Spanish. The phrase is lo Santo and is a neuter noun, thus means "Holy Thing."

John 1:1

Some have objected because the Valera uses the Spanish word Verbo instead of Palabra. Both can mean, "Word," but sometimes verbo can mean verb. However, in the Spanish mind, Verbo means nothing less than the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Standard English-Spanish and Spanish-English Dictionary, (by Dr. Emilio M. Martinez Amador), the following is found under the listing for verbo. "m. Word, second person of the Trinity: (gram.) verb; curse; swear: en un verbo, at once, without delay: convertir en verbo, to verify." The Spanish-English and English-Spanish Dictionary (prepared by Mario A. Pei and edited by Salvatore Ramondino, Signet Books) reads: "n.m. 1. verb. 2. cap., theol. Word.) Again, the evidence supports the reading of the Valera.

John 1:14

Again, those who do not understand Spanish have stated that the Valera has removed the phrase "only begotten" and reads "one and only" much as the NIV does. This simply is not true. The Spanish text uses the word *unigenito*, and as with the Greek is a compound noun. The New World Spanish-English and English-Spanish Dictionary, simply defines *unigenito* as "only-begotten." (p. 518).

John 1:15

The Valera is charged with leaving out the phrase "preferred before me," thus weakening the Deity of Christ. Once again, this statement is untrue. The text reads, "es ante de mi," which is to say, "is preferred more than me" or "is preferred before me."

John 3:16

The English phrase "shall never perish" is translated back from the Spanish to read "shall never be lost." The Spanish is, "no se pierda." True, the word pierda means lost, however it also means to perish. In the market, Spanish-speaking people will use this word to denote fruits or vegetables which have spoiled. We call these "perishables." This is a good example of the problem of translating from one language into another. What does the word mean to the one who uses it? To the Spanish mind, pierda means to perish.

John 4:24

Modern English versions read, "God is Spirit" where the KJV reads, "God is a Spirit." The Spanish is translated back into English and reads "God is Spirit" (Dios es Espirito). However, this is not a case of the Spanish text reading as modern English texts read. Instead, it is a matter of Spanish grammar. As with the Greek (which also does not have an indefinite article), Spanish sometimes does not use the indefinite article when a sentence is stated because it is understood by Spanish grammar. In Spanish, the indefinite article is not used when it is followed by an unmodified noun (Monarch's Clear and Simple Spanish, [New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1986], p. 214). The subject noun in the phrase is God/Dios. The noun Spirit/Espirito is the unmodified noun. Thus, according to Spanish grammar, if one wished to express the phrase "God is a Spirit" they would have to say, "Dios es Espirito."

Romans 3:25

The English phrase, "to declare his righteousness for the remission of sin" is said to be omitted. This is not true. The Valera reads, " . . . para manifestacion do su justicia, attento a haber pasado por alto, en su paciencia, los pecados pasados." The whole phrase is there, but the word order is different because this is Spanish, not English.

Revelation 13:18

The claim is that the Valera reads "man" instead of "a man." This is the very same grammatical problem listed in John 4:24 with the use of the indefinite article and an unmodified noun. The Valera, as the KJV, used proper grammar.

There are other examples, but most fall into the same line of reasoning as the above. Additionally, some types of criticism deal with Spanish idioms as opposed to the ones in Greek or English. We must understand that one cannot always say in Spanish (word-for-word) what is said in English, nor can one always say in English (word-for-word) what is said in Spanish. For example, in John 11:26 the English phrase "shall never die" is translated into Spanish as "no morira eternamente" (shall not die eternally). This is not an attempt to corrupt the text, but rather an example of a Spanish idiom as opposed to an English one.

There are, nevertheless, some differences between the KJV and the Valera which are clearly textual. Most are due to the 1865 edition of the Valera which made massive changes to the text which the 1909 edition tried to correct. Others are due to the variant readings found in the majority text. The ensuing list provides some examples of such.

Passage KJV Valera

Matt. 15:8 "draweth nigh unto me with their mouth" omitted

Matt. 24:2 "Jesus" omitted

Matt. 28:2 "from the door" omitted

Mark 1:2 "in the prophets" "Isaias el profeta"

Mark 2:17 "to repentance" omitted

Mark 9:24 "Lord" omitted

Mark 11:10 "in the name of the Lord" omitted

Luke 4:41 "Christ" omitted

Luke 11:29 "the prophet" omitted

Luke 23:42 "Lord" omitted

Acts 7:30 "of the Lord" omitted

Acts 20:28 "God" "Senor"

Rom. 1:16 "of Christ" omitted

1 Cor. 9:1 "Christ" omitted

2 Cor. 4:10 "the Lord" omitted

Eph. 3:9 "by Jesus Christ" omitted

2 Thess. 2:2 "Christ" "dia del Senor"

1 John 3:16 "of God" omitted

Desiring to have a Spanish translation which eliminates these problems, missionary to Central America Bernard McVey produced his own Spanish version of the New Testament. The opening title page reads:

Biblia Autorizada Del Rey Jaime 1611. Traducida del original Griego y diligentement comparado y revisado con las traducciones anteriores por mandato especial de su majestad.

Thus, this is said to be a Spanish KJV. Although I am certain that Brother McVey's intentions were of the highest nobility, his production is not. By simply taking a KJV and translating it into another language, it is not expected that the translation will be of the same character and quality as the Authorized Version.

For example, the KJV uses both Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost to express the Greek *agiu pneuma*. The Spanish Valera uses the phrase, "Espiritu Santo," to express both. The McVey Version, however, tries and fails to distinguish the two as the English does. Whenever the KJV reads Holy Spirit, McVey uses *Espiritu Santo*. However, when the KJV reads Holy Ghost, McVey uses the phrase "Fantasma Santo." The problem is that in Spanish the word *fantasma* denotes an evil spirit, phantom, or a spook. To the English mind, the phrase Holy Ghost does not conjure evil. But to the Spanish mind the word *fantasma* does.

Another example can be found in John 3:16. The English translates the Greek *monogenh* as only begotten. This is proper because *monogenh* is a compound noun in Greek. The Spanish is like the Greek in that it uses a compound noun to translate the compound noun found in the Greek text. The Valera uses the word "unigenito." Both mean the only one who is begotten. However, because the English takes two words to express the compound noun in Greek, McVey's translation does the same and reads, "unico engendrado." This also means only begotten, but is not as clear to the Spanish reader. In fact, it can create a theological problem. The Spanish word *engendrado* literally means to engender or to create. Thus, one reading this translation could think of Christ as a creature instead of the Creator.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 is often criticized in the KJV because of the word *prevent*. The English word means more than to hinder; it means before (pre) the event. The Valera uses the word *precederemos* which means precede or to go before. The McVey Version uses the word *imprediremos* which means to impede or hinder. Therefore, this version is not conveying the true meaning of the English word, but the common misunderstanding of it.

One final example before moving on. In Luke 5:32 (and elsewhere) the Valera uses the word *justos* where the KJV uses the word *righteous*. McVey, however, uses the Spanish word *rectos*. This is fine in Spain and Central America where the word means straight or upright or to make honest and right. However, in Mexico the word means rectum. Therefore, his version is not intended for all who read or speak Spanish. These few examples (and there are many others) demonstrates that it takes more than retranslating the KJV into Spanish in order to produce a Spanish KJV.

Conclusion

The Bible believing Christian must remember that God is the Author of Scripture. It is His obligation to provide for His people the words He wishes for them to have. As we are reminded in the book of Psalms, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." (Psalm 68:11). To the Spanish-speaking world it seems that the word which the Lord has given them is the Valera. It supports the Traditional Greek Text, it is the closest translation in Spanish to our English Authorized Version (in both text and style), and it is the most beloved Spanish version with a history supporting the Reformation. If anything is truly going to replace it, than it would take the guidance and hand of the Lord to do so. Until such time, we can say with our Spanish brethren:

"Siendo renacidos, no de simiente corruptible, sino de incorruptible, por la palabra de Dios que vive y permanece para siempre." --1 Pedro 1:23

Gloria a Dios

Back to the [Bible Believers' Home Page](#)

2.

[^] Van Kerckvoorde, Colette M. (June 1993). *An Introduction to Middle Dutch* . Walter de Gruyter. p. 105. ISBN 3110135353.

3.

[^] Mastrelli, Carlo A. *Grammatica Gotica*, p. 34.

4.

[^] Socrates of Constantinople, *Church History*, book 4, chapter 33.

The Gothic alphabet was a modified Greek alphabet; see Wright, Joseph *A Primer of the Gothic Language with Grammar, Notes, and Glossary*, p. 2.

The most complete Gothic texts borrow elements from the Roman alphabet; see Bennett, William H. *An Introduction to the Gothic Language*, p. 126.

5.

[^] http://www.goruma.de/Missen/KunstundKultur/WelterbestaettenUNESCO/Unesco_Welterbestaetten_Deutschland/kaiser_mariendom_speyer.html

6.

[^] For an overview and evaluation of the historical sources, see Hagith Sivan, "Ulfila's Own Conversion," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (October 1996): pp. 373–86.

7.

[^] Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, p. 143.

8.

[^] Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, pp. 135-137.

External links

[\[edit\]](#)

- Streitberg's edition of Ulfilas' Bible
- Jim Marchand's translation on Auxentius' letter on Ulfilas' career and beliefs, with Latin text
- Project Wulfila
- Gothic fonts after Ulfilas

Categories: [Arian bishops](#) | [4th-century bishops](#) | [Gothic people](#) | [Late Antiquity](#) | [Theologians](#) | [Bible translators](#) | [Inventors of writing systems](#) | [310 births](#) | [383 deaths](#) | [Gothic Bible](#)

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